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The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies was established in 1993 in response to post-Cold War security challenges, such as helping former Soviet satellites develop democratic institutions.

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Forming Bonds of Diplomacy to Avoid War

Remarks as delivered by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Gen. Henry H. Shelton, USA, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to a George C. Marshall Center student seminar, followed by an edited excerpt of a question-and-answer session, Washington, March 17, 1998.

Shelton. Thank you very much. ... The Marshall Center has worked to promote democratic values and enduring relationships among our nations. It has played a very key role in fostering peace and stability throughout the region.

You and the 28 nations that you represent are at the vanguard of efforts to build a framework for peace and prosperity in Europe and Central Asia and that, of course, is what the Marshall Center is all about.

Let me begin by congratulating each of you, all highly regarded members of your countries' armed forces or government, on your selection for such an important and broadening experience. What you see and learn in your Marshall Center experience will be invaluable in the years ahead, as you move up to even more senior and responsible positions.

Only a few years ago, we faced each other across a great divide. But today, we are friends and partners. I think that is a wonderful testimonial to how far we have all come in breaking down the barriers that once divided us.

Today, our nations are finally working as friends with common names, striving to build a better future for children and their children, a goal that I'm sure we all share.

The NATO-sponsored Partnership for Peace program stands as a shining example of what the future holds for cooperation in Europe and Central Asia. Just a decade ago, none of us could have imagined such things taking place.

From a military perspective, the partnership has strengthened the interaction between members, it has enhanced interoperability and prepared many nations to participate with NATO in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

In Bosnia, troops from 15 partner nations serve alongside NATO forces, and that has made all the difference in stopping the bloodshed and bringing hope to that troubled nation. Moreover, in 1997 alone, partner nations participated in more than 40 exercises and other events across Europe and Central Asia.

Next week, the United States Senate is expected to vote on the agreement that would allow three partner nations to become NATO members.

Over the last four years, the Partnership for Peace has fulfilled its promise of greater political and military integration between the member nations. But even considering all the great progress that our countries have made, much remains to be done.

So I hope that each of you feel a great sense of excitement and a burden of responsibility, because every

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one of you will have a vital role to play.

I wish all of you Godspeed in the task of establishing a foundation for lasting peace and stability. Thank you. ...

Cohen. Let me say to all of you, welcome. In my office upstairs, I have a portrait that hangs over my desk. It is a portrait of George C. Marshall. He is a great soldier and statesman, certainly, of the 20th century.

Marshall stands as one of the true heroes of this century, and he had a vision. He had a vision for Europe, that it would be undivided, it would be whole, it would be free and it would be prosperous.

At the end of the Cold War, when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, we have an opportunity to make that dream of his a reality.

That, of course, is precisely the reason for the Marshall Center, to take the young leaders from all of the countries who would wish to share in that dream; to help foster ties and intellectual exchanges and a realization of what is possible in a free society; and [to] help define what the role of the military is in a democracy in a free society, where there is civilian control over the military, where we have full openness and accountability, [and where] we must share that accountability with the Congress of the United States and with the American people.

And so this is an opportunity for other nations to take advantage of what is offered at the Marshall Center, to learn from each other, to share your experiences and to learn from others.

At the end of that Cold War, there was a paper that was presented by a Francis Fukuyama [an academician]. Some of you may recall that he called it "The End of History." And what he was suggesting at that time was that democratic liberalism and economic capitalism was going to sweep across the globe.

It produced a comment from a South African academician by the name of Peter Vale who said "Rejoice, my friends, or weep with sorrow. What California is today, the world will be tomorrow."

I'm not sure how that translates but, for those of you who are getting it in the straight English, there is a little bit of irony involved in all of that. If you're from California, you will not appreciate that comment. If you are not from California, but Maine, you might.

But in any event, what Fukuyama proposed was this general concept sweeping throughout all of the European theater, certainly, and into Asia, and it produced something of a backlash from people like [historian] Samuel Huntington.

He wrote his book, called "The Clash of Civilizations," in which he saw a future that was filled with ethnic conflict, with religious dissension and with a clash of cultures across the globe, from Confucian to Orthodox and Christian, and that Fukuyama didn't take that into account.

So whether you believe Fukuyama is right or you believe in Huntington, what Marshall, and what the Marshall Center is saying, is that we are really at the dawn of a new era, where we have the opportunity to make choices.

We can choose to yield to the clash of cultures, or we can try to pursue an opportunity to share in a common vision for what we want for all of our peoples.

So I think that the very fact that you are the students at the Marshall Center indicates that your choice is one that is pursuing a common vision. It doesn't mean you have to have a common culture, but it does mean you have to share the same ideals for a free and open society in which the military has, obviously, a very important role.

When I say that you are students, there is something that we say in this country, that we believe in school ties. You are 86 in number, but you will number, I think, a total of about 800 people who have passed through the center since its creation.

Part of the benefit of being students, of course, is that you will maintain these ties during the course of your lives. The people that you meet during this experience will remain your friends. You will have an opportunity to come into contact with each other over the years.

And, based on my own experience for the past 25 years of being in public office, I can tell you there is nothing more important than building these invisible bonds that we share.

I know that we have some Russian students in the audience, and I might say that I had some years ago established some very strong ties with a couple of your poets, [Yevgeni A.] Yevtushenko and [Andrei A.] Voznesenskii.

As a result of those friendships, we have stayed in touch over [the] years, and they have had, I think, a very major impact on some of our policies, believe it or not, when Mr. Voznesenskii came and he met with President Ronald Reagan. And I arranged for a very brief meeting with him, so that he could express to an American president the need for greater cultural exchanges.

What Voznesenskii wanted was for us to read more Russian writers so we would have a better appreciation of Russia's history, and to start sharing writers and musicians and students and, indeed, even soldiers.

As a result of that meeting, there was an immediate meltdown of any ice cap that might have existed at that time. And Ronald Reagan said, "This is important. You're right." And things started to take place, from that moment on.

But I mention this only in connection with the importance of maintaining these ties.

Yevtushenko said something to me, and I quoted it at the National Press Club today, this afternoon, he said, "You and I must stay in touch with each other. Otherwise, we will forget each other's faces." And when you forget each other's faces in a time of crisis, it becomes quite easy to demonize the other side.

What this experience is helping, I think, you to do, and hopefully will succeed in doing, is to resist that temptation when there are disputes or conflicts or tensions, to demonize the other side, but rather to seek ways in which you can find common ground.

So that is all part of this experience, but yours is really focusing upon the military aspect and, of course, NATO enlargement is part of it. I know this is controversial in Russian circles and others.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council is also very important, and that's another breakthrough, I think, that we have had.

The chairman just talked about Bosnia, and he and I have both been to Bosnia on many occasions; and I don't think that either one of us ever would have thought, five or 10 years ago, that we would see some 31 or even 40 nations who are standing shoulder-to-shoulder together in the cause of peace in that particular tortured country.

So all of this is very important, and I will finish with a reference to Czech President Vaclav Havel, who came before a joint session of Congress some years ago, and he got up and his first words were, "Things are happening so quickly, we have little time to be astonished."

All of us who are living in this age of [author and futurist Alvin] Toffler's "Future Shock" understand that things are happening very rapidly, and time has become speeded up by events; there's really not much opportunity to make the kinds of decisions that we are called upon to make, and again, all the more important that all of you pass through the Marshall Center as students and to build these ties and

this understanding that, hopefully, will serve all of us well in the future.

Let me stop and commend all of you for being willing to participate in this program. It is, I think, going to be invaluable, not only to you, but to us, as well.

Q. What do you think are the prospects for further military cooperation with the Russian Federation and also with the other newly independent states?

Cohen. Let me try to answer that first. I would like to say we really do appreciate having a chance to spend a few moments with you.

As a matter of fact, I think that we are looking forward to spending this half hour with you, because we have to face the United States Congress tomorrow for three hours, so we are really sort of getting ready for our testimony on the Hill tomorrow.

But I think the prospects for more cooperation are greater. I have again been visiting in your country just recently.

I was in Moscow about three weeks ago, and had occasion to sit down with six members, six or seven members of the Duma [Russian parliament], to talk about issues of concern to them, to meet with your minister of defense, Minister [Igor] Sergeyev, to talk about ways in which we can reduce the level of nuclear arms in our countries, START II ratification and moving on to START III, to find ways in which we can pursue the NATO-Russia Charter, or the Founding Act, [and] ways in which we can exchange information, [and] technology, in terms of dealing with issues that will confront us in the future. ...

If you were to stop by my office and my glass display case in my office, you would see a blue beret that was given to me by a Russian soldier when I was visiting Bosnia a year or two ago. He was so enthusiastic and so proud to be a part of the SFOR [stabilization force] mission that he took off his hat and he gave it to me as a sign of his friendship and appreciation. I think that sentiment is being replicated day after day, and we're seeing a greater sense of desire to cooperate on a variety of issues.

We saw most recently a dispute -- not a dispute but a disagreement -- on whether or not force should be used in Iraq. Russia had a different opinion than the United States and other countries.

Nonetheless, that did not interfere with the larger, broader agenda that we have, on a variety of issues on which we seek to cooperate. ...

Shelton. And I would just add that I have also had the opportunity to meet with your [Russian] chief of defense, Gen.[Anatoly] Kvashnin. We have discussed mutual areas of cooperation, to include more combined-type exercises.

We have also looked at increasing Russia's participation in the Partnership for Peace program and several other initiatives that are ongoing.

So we feel that one of the best ways that we can break down the old, the mistrust that existed in previous years, and increase the mutual trust and bonds between our forces is through greater military-to-military contacts and, in essence, as I've said before in speeches, trying to replace the iron curtain with a picture window, so that the more we get to know one another, [and] the more we work together, the more we are likely to understand each other better and understand what the goals and aims are which, I think, will serve us both well.

Q. Under which [U.S. unified] command [should] Central Asia ... come? Should that be under Central Command? European Command? And what will be the final criteria for deciding this question?

What are the initiatives in the future concerning Central Asia, and what will be done on the part of the United States for solving the Tajik problem?

Shelton. Thank you very much for your question. It is a very important issue.

As you know the United States divides the world ... into five geographical areas. The recommendation has been that the Central Asian countries would be placed under Central Command for oversight and for working with the governments and the militaries within that region.

But all of the others, unassigned nations of the world, right now, are part of a biannual review that we do ... called the Unified Command Plan that ultimately goes to the secretary of defense and then to the president for decision. Those ... not assigned by the current plan will be reviewed ... for a 1999 decision as to whether or not to place them under one of these five respective commanders in chief.

Cohen. With respect to the other areas that we are going to pursue, obviously arms reductions are one of the most important. I mentioned before [that] START II ratification by the Duma would be very desirable, and then moving on to START III, because START II would put a lot of enormous pressure on the Russians to meet those levels.

And so we want to move on beyond START II very quickly and, as soon as the Duma can ratify that, we'll be able to initiate -- we have already preliminary talks -- but to really initiate an aggressive dialogue and how we can get down below the ... 3,000 to 3,500 level we would be at, with START II; we would go down to at least 2,000 or 2,500. That would be in our mutual interest, and so that would be an area of cooperative threat reduction. This is something, the so-called Nunn-Lugar program.

When I was in Moscow recently, I went out to visit one of the sites to see the kind of technology that the United States is helping to provide in order to have a safe disposal of the nuclear materials. We're also applying it to chemical weapons, as well [as] those areas, obviously, where we are going to continue to cooperate.

We would also try to cooperate in environmental issues. I mentioned the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission as such is talking about environmental aspects of ozone depletion and other types of things that would be important, as well as how we can reduce the amount of weapons proliferation that's taking place. So there is no shortage of issues that we have to discuss and can cooperate on.

In addition, as far as Tajikistan is concerned, we think that the Partnership for Peace program is something that is very desirable for Tajikistan and the other Central Asian countries. [We think] that as long as we can have people who are willing to exercise together to cooperate in the planning and the carrying out of peacekeeping missions, [and] humanitarian operations, that brings people together in a way that I think would be beneficial to that country, as well as to our own.

Q. Soon the accession countries will finally become NATO members. How long does it take, in your opinion, to include them fully into the decision-making process within the NATO organization, and what factors will play a key role in this process?

Cohen. Well, as soon as the ratification process is completed; I would expect it would be completed by the end of this year, with all the countries who have to pass judgment through their various parliaments.

Once a country is admitted, then it becomes a partner in the NATO organization, as such, and structure.

A lot will depend, in terms of the individual countries -- Poland in this particular aspect -- on how quickly are you going to be able to make the kind of changes necessary to upgrade your military capabilities to be a full participant as such.

We are looking at a period of time from now, for the next 10 years, for the three countries who are coming in, in order to have a fully integrated, upgraded capability. But the responsibilities begin immediately.

It's not a question of waiting until you have the full military capability in terms of upgrading of the airfields. What we look for really is training personnel.

The most important thing that Poland, the Czech Republic, [and] Hungary can do is to get a strong, vital NCO corps -- non-commissioned officer corps. That is the heart of having a solid military capability.

We want to see greater efficiency in language, for example, so that we can talk to each other. We want to place the emphasis on education, and also on command, control, [and] communication, so that we can communicate together.

And then, at the very end of that spectrum, you look at upgrading the equipment itself, the high-tech sophisticated equipment. That comes last, in our judgment.

So what you have to have is emphasis on people, and that should begin immediately. Many are already doing that.

So the obligations come quickly. Responsibilities come quickly. The capability may take anywhere from three to five to 10 years, but it doesn't have any impact upon being integrated into the system.

Q. The three Baltic states and U.S. signed a [nonbinding] charter at the beginning of this year. ... I would like to hear your opinion: To what degree will this document ... give impetus for the strengthening of security of those ... states in view of [their] not-very-feasible membership ... in the NATO Alliance?

Cohen. Well, the signing of this nonbinding document, as such, is really symbolic in nature, but symbols are important. And the symbolism involved is that, yes, we would like to see a greater participation on the part of the Baltic states in various PFP exercises.

We talked about NATO enlargement, that no country is excluded by virtue of geography, but this is a long process. The door is open, but there are very steep stairs that one has to climb to get through the door at the top of the steps. We are trying to approach it in that fashion.

In the meantime, we look at the Partnership for Peace program as really the building blocks for countries who may or may not come into NATO, formal NATO membership in the future.

For example, I was in Ukraine last summer, and I saw the end of a Partnership for Peace exercise in Ukraine. I can tell you that the American forces who were there, many from the Guard and Reserve units, were anxious to come back. They had such a great experience in that exercise with 10 other countries that were there that they couldn't wait to come back and exercise again.

And this sort of building of a spirit of cooperation, understanding, I think is of benefit, of great benefit to us, as well. This is something where we are able to pass on our values and our insights, and we are able to benefit from the values and insights of others as well.

So I think that that is a program that the Baltic states could certainly take advantage of.

Q. During our course ... we've been talking about the revision of the NATO Strategic Concept. And I would like to ask you what will be the role of the three invitees in this process during the next year, as we are not yet members of NATO? Just how do you perceive the role of the three invited countries, in the process of the revision of the strategic concept? ...

Cohen. Well, to give you an example, we had a NATO meeting in Brussels last December, and there were members from the three invitees who were there. They participated in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. We had a larger meeting with some 40 countries. We had the three invitees who were there at the conference.

To the extent that they are awaiting formal accession, they are not able to participate in terms of the voting and the consensus building that takes place there, but they nonetheless, their presence, by their very presence, they are building ties, they are building bonds that will serve them well as soon as they come in. But they don't have a formal role. It is informal in nature. But nonetheless, it is very important.

Let me give you an example of how we look at the situation.

When it came time to deciding whether or not the United States and Great Britain and other countries should be considering the possibility of using force in order to get compliance out of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, there were 13 out of 16 NATO members who agreed to support that effort. There were also 16 out of 19, including the three new members, who said, "Let us help."

So the three nations -- Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary -- were ready, willing and able to participate in that effort, as far as sharing that burden.

That was a very strong sign, as far as what their role will be in the future, the willingness to bear the burdens as well as enjoy the benefits of membership. That was not specifically a NATO operation, but 13 out of [16] NATO countries ... said, "We are willing to help," and then you had the three new members who were willing to help. That was a very good sign of their level of participation, and it will be in the future, as far as NATO is concerned.

Q. How do you see the continued or new engagement of the United States in the Balkan area after June of 1998 and in the region of Kosovo?

Cohen. Well, after June of 1998, as you know, the president of the United States, President Clinton, has indicated he wants the United States to stay in Bosnia. The chairman and I are going up to Capitol Hill tomorrow to testify on the United States role in Bosnia, following June of this year.

It still remains controversial, as far as members of Congress are concerned. Many take the position that it is not in the United States' interest to be militarily present, if not engaged, in Bosnia. And they take the position that this is really a European problem and not an American problem. And of course, we will then try to explain or articulate our view, that if there is difficulty or instability in Europe, that can have a major impact upon American security as well.

As we are looking at an ever-shrinking globe, technology is reducing the size of the globe to a very small ball; today, what takes place in other countries may have seemed distant and remote 10 or 15 years ago, or 20 years ago. It is less remote today by virtue of the closeness that technology has generated.

So we will attempt to make the case that it is important for us to remain. There are issues that have to be decided, in terms of how long, how can we predict what our role will be into the future, how much will it cost.

We will be requesting some \$487 million, just to cover the cost between June of this year and September, and then we will be requesting beyond that another \$1.9 billion for the next fiscal year, all of which we are asking in addition to the current budget that we have. So that is going to stimulate a lot of controversy, to say the least.

But we believe that we have a very strong case to make that it is important for the United States to remain longer, that we have, in fact, been successful -- we, along with all of our allies, have been successful -- in helping to stabilize that portion of the Balkans.

[We believe] that Kosovo does, in fact, present a very serious challenge to all, that it's important that the European countries, as well as the United States, try to come to a resolution very quickly on what measures need to be taken diplomatically, perhaps even economically, to see if we can't persuade both parties that they should lower the tensions. ... We would hope that there would not be a return to the status quo, that namely, we think that, in Kosovo, there should be some granting of additional autonomy, but we do not support independence. And by the same token, we do not want to see [Yugoslav President Slobodan] Milosevic lending support to a crackdown that would only stir up the kind of ethnic conflict that could spill over into many other regions, that would affect a much larger portion of Europe. ...

We do recognize the volatility of what is taking place there, and what we need to have happen is concerted action, not action by the United States acting alone. The Europeans obviously need to have

some kind of a consolidated opinion of what needs to be done and then, working together, we can hopefully reinforce the diplomatic initiative that is now under way.

Q. We all know and we all hope that the idea of Fukuyama, in the end, will overrule the idea of Huntington. But nevertheless, this is still necessary for a victory for supporting the armed forces. When, and at which point, will this no longer be necessary?

Cohen. First of all, with respect to promoting Fukuyama's vision, that we would see the spread of democratic liberalism, economic capitalism, to the extent that that spreads, to the extent that we see, for example, without getting into a major controversy here, in terms of viewpoints on NATO enlargement, but to the extent that we create greater stability -- stability, in turn, leads itself to investment.

Major companies, for example, will not go into a region in which there is instability. They will not risk their investment. So if you have stability, you are likely to enjoy at least a higher level of investment and, therefore, prosperity. When you have prosperity, then you are likely to have greater stability. So it is what I call a virtuous circle, that if you have stability, you will have the likelihood of greater opportunity for economic prosperity. That, in turn, generates more stability.

How long will that take, and will you ever see a withering away, if I can use that phrase, of the military? The answer is, I doubt it. You will always need a military in order to satisfy your constituents that you have self-protection, that you have self-defense for your country's interest, that you can maintain that self-defense in a way that is completely harmonious with your neighbors.

And it doesn't pose a threat to your neighbor that you have a military that is strong and disciplined and well-led. That should not pose a threat to your neighbor. As long as you are approaching it on a regional basis, trying to build bridges, trying to share visions and values, then the likelihood of conflict is more remote. But every country will always want to have some security force as such, at least for the foreseeable future. I do not see that kind of nirvana, that you would never need a military.

You will always need a military. Perhaps its size and shape and what it will look like will differ as we continue to evolve in the 21st century, but I doubt whether mankind itself has evolved to that point, that we would say there never will be a need to have a defensive capability, because there will always be some suspicions, there will always be the rise of some discontent on the part of some. And to the extent that you have one area that is not sharing in the prosperity vs. another area that is, then the likelihood of that kind of conflict gets greater.

So it is going to take time, and that is precisely why we have been advocating NATO enlargement, not to pose a threat to the Russians, not to pose a threat to any other country. But we see it as a way to provide for greater stability in a region that has known instability, [and] that if we can reduce that and also, at the same time, reduce fears on the part of those who might see it as a threat, then we have an opportunity to spread that stability over a much wider geographic area, and reduce the kinds of things that we're seeing take place in Kosovo today, the kinds of things that took place with Bosnia.

If we can reduce those tensions by spreading stability and prosperity, then we make the need for large armies and militaries less necessary. But ... always, I think, every country will want to have some protection, just to be sure that they're not going to be taken advantage of. That was a long answer, so we still have one more question. ...

Q. The Georgian parliament ... [is] working together with the United States in the military sphere ... on a bilateral level as well as on a multilateral level. And also, the United States has been helpful in setting up our sea border protection. ... I would like to hear from you what you see as being the prospects for our further military cooperation and in which direction this type of cooperation should go.

Cohen. The kind of cooperation that we are seeking is consistent with what I mentioned before about the Partnership for Peace program. The one thing that we've tried to make clear is that the United States is not seeking any more territory, we are not looking to conquer anyone, we do not have designs on any other country.

Obviously, to the extent that we can be successful in promoting stability in regions, to the extent that those countries can become more prosperous, that obviously presents an opportunity for our business community to invest and to share in that prosperity.

It's a question that I have to answer many times up on Capitol Hill, for example, when I have members who will ask me why do we have 100,000 troops over in the Asia-Pacific region? Why not let the Asians take care of Asia? Why not let the Europeans take care of Europe?

I have to point out that by our providing some stability to that region -- and I was recently in China and made the same argument to the Chinese counterparts -- that by the United States having a presence, we're not seeking territory, we're not trying to intimidate or conquer anyone. By providing a presence in the region and stability -- because countries know we're not seeking any territory -- those nations, for the most part, have been allowed to prosper.

China has been a major beneficiary of that stability, because they have been allowed to prosper without having to build up a major military capability that would challenge all of those in the region. So everybody has prospered by that.

We feel the same thing applies to Georgia or any of the other republics, former republics of the Soviet Union, that to the extent that they can have a stable environment, to the extent that there is stability, you will see investments.

And when there is investment, there is an opportunity for prosperity that is shared by not only your citizens but, obviously, other countries, the countries who send their businessmen and women there. They obviously want to invest, so they can make a profit to distribute to their stockholders and to their countrymen.

Everybody benefits when you have that rising tide. So what we would hope is, to the extent that Georgia or any other country can share in Partnership for Peace, can share other types of relationships with the United States and other NATO countries and other European countries, ... that will promote the kind of stability and prosperity that will hopefully benefit the people of Georgia.

Q. We think that the stability in Central Asia is, to a great deal, dependent on Afghanistan. I would like to know ... to [what] extent the United States can impact and show influence on the Taliban in order to stabilize the region?

Shelton. I think, as Secretary Cohen has said, the more that our nations work together throughout that region, the more that we have a chance to foster peace and stability and cooperation among the various nations.

Obviously, there are going to be challenges that will lend themselves to influence from some areas more than others. I think that, in this particular case, the more that the surrounding nations are participating or cooperating with one another, the greater they will have a chance to influence the action in the adjoining countries, etc.

Many times I am asked, what is NATO for today, if you're not against anything? And the answer is, as we've said several times, for peace and stability within the member countries and within the surrounding region. And so I think that, as NATO continues to grow, as it has now ... has the potential to do with the three new nations coming in, that we will see greater stability.

One of the proud things that NATO has is that none of its members have fought each other for 50 years. That's a pretty enviable record, I think. And it says that, among those 16 nations -- soon, hopefully, to be 19 nations -- you have a chance for maybe another half a century of peace and stability.

But by working with one another and approaching some of the crises on a regional basis, you will have a chance to influence things like Kosovo, like Afghanistan, more than you can if you're trying to deal with

that in a bilateral or even a multilateral, with two or three other nations. A regional approach, I think, would lend itself much more than a one-on-one.

Cohen. If I could add just one complicating factor to all of this, as you are studying the role of the military in a democratic society, you will also discover that in the United States, we have a number of values that we insist upon and that, when the members of Congress who, in fact, are controlling -- they are responsible for raising and supporting an army, so they have control of what we call the purse strings -- when they see that a country is engaged in repressive behavior, when they see that there are abuses of human rights, [and] when they see that there are activities under way -- either taken by the military or by the political leadership of a country that is inconsistent with our stated ideals, there is a reaction. And that reaction would be, "Let's cut off funding to that particular country, let's not sell certain weapons to that particular country." That, in turn, builds resentment in the country that we've been dealing with.

And so we have to also deal with that kind of an issue: ... how do we have influence in Afghanistan, what kind of relationship do we have with Pakistan, what kind of relationship do we have with India, what happens if Pakistan and India don't have good relations, how do we build a regional approach to dealing with Afghanistan?

It gets very complicated, because there are issues in which congressional members say, "We do not want to see the United States' taxpayer dollars going to a country that doesn't measure up to our high standards." So that is something that also complicates the issue, as we try to build these kinds of regional relationships.

We have had, for a long time, the issue of whether or not China should be granted most-favored-nation trading status. Every year, that comes up for a vote. President Clinton is in favor of extending most-favored-nation status, which really means regular trading status to China. We have found that, by engaging China in military-to-military contacts [and] political-to-political contacts, -- not only congressional, but my own office, in dealing with my counterparts in China -- we are able to successfully, at least, break down some of the misunderstanding. That's a way in which China can be helpful with us dealing with North Korea, by way of example. Our relationship with Japan also may be helpful in dealing with China.

So as we try to build the network of understanding, realizing that we're not always going to have unanimous agreement, that nonetheless, if we build what the chairman was saying in terms of a regional approach, we have a much better chance of influencing behavior in a particular country than if the United States says, "We don't like what you're doing over in Afghanistan, and here's how it's going to be done."

We don't have that kind of influence on any single country, that we can dictate the terms of what is going to take place inside that country. We can raise questions. We can say, "Here are our values. You won't get help unless you abide by these." But unless there is a concerted effort and a regional or much wider approach to it, it's unlikely that country is going to be responsive.

So I agree wholeheartedly with the chairman in what he has just expressed to you in terms of how do we have an impact upon Afghanistan by approaching other countries in the region to see if we can't build a consensus and a common plan for helping to shape the attitudes of those people in a given country in a positive way.

Shelton. And if I could just add one additional comment, I think, as the world changes -- and I think we all agree that what we've seen in the last few years is indicative of the way that the world is changing, and I think we'll see even more of that as we look out toward 2010, to where we'll be dealing more with asymmetric and transnational threats to each of our countries. And the more alliances, [and] cooperative agreements that you have with your neighbors that allow you to take on these threats, be it terrorism, organized crime, drugs -- those are threats to each of our societies that transcend boundaries -- if we have these agreements and we are working with one another, then we can take on these threats to our different governments in a much more effective and efficient manner.

Cohen. The military is not supposed to have the last word in our society, but here, today, they do.

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